



Spring 2003

# Volunteer View

A newsletter for volunteers at Indiana State Parks & Reservoirs

## 2002 Volunteer of the Year: Charlie Ridenour

By Connie Farmer, Interpretive Naturalist, Falls of the Ohio State Park

Charlie Ridenour was honored as the 2002 State Parks and Reservoirs Volunteer of the Year at the annual division meeting and awards ceremony held March 13, 2003 at Fort Harrison State Park in Indianapolis. He has provided valuable services to the communities of Southern Indiana and to area visitors.

Not wanting a single child to go home without understanding what an incredible treasure of geologic history, natural beauty and fascinating human drama the area has to offer, Charlie will assist students with the activity sheets they use in the exhibit gallery. Students feel welcomed and encouraged by his warm smile and friendly pat on the back. When the Falls movie is about to begin, he hollers “show time,” and ushers them into the auditorium where he dazzles them with stories and facts about the area that they may not hear elsewhere. Teachers, parents, and chaperones will make a special point to tell us about Charlie’s contribution to their field trips.

Some of us say that Charlie Ridenour is “for the birds.” Along with filling the many feeders in our Wildlife Observation Area, he repairs the feeders damaged by raccoons and weather, completely disassembles and thoroughly cleans the feeders when necessary, and remembers to put up or take down the hummingbird and suet feeders as the seasons change.

As if volunteering on Thursday mornings is not enough, Charlie takes his volunteer job home with him, and works on weekends for special events. He built and installed a shelf for a computer scanner and fixed a paddle wheel for our steamboat exhibit. For Fossil Festival Weekend, Archaeology Day, and the Riverboat Festival, this dedicated volunteer arrives at the Falls early to help get things set up, uses his “handyman” talents to fix most problems that arise, and is helpful and cheerful as he greets the visitors. He has been the Clarksville Riverfront Foundation (our “friends” group) president for two years. Charlie is well known for his involvement in our community, he serves on 6 other boards!

With over 1300 hours of volunteer time at the Falls of the Ohio State Park in the past seven years, this devoted and hardworking man is truly deserving of this special honor. He is one incredible volunteer!



Charlie Ridenour accepts the award for 2002 Volunteer of the Year from Jerry Pagac, Director of State Parks and Reservoirs.

### Volunteers are Important to Us!

Indiana State Parks and Reservoirs had 2,823 volunteers in 2002. They worked over 51,000 hours as campground hosts, interpretive center greeters, program presenters, animal caregivers, field volunteers, interns and more. That's up 15% from 2001. There were 572 individual volunteers with 33,443 hours total. We had 122 groups (2,234 individuals) contributing 13,482 total hours. In addition, we had 17 interns working over 4,400 total hours. Thanks so much for your help!

## Spring Mill State Park Hosts 2003 Volunteer Resource Fair

by Carrie Miller, Spring Mill State Park

Spring Mill State Park hosted a Volunteer Resource Fair on Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Interpretive Center. Volunteers and park staff were on hand to demonstrate their own unique crafts and talents. Volunteers were able to discuss with interested visitors what they enjoy about volunteering at Spring Mill State Park. They met and shared ideas with other volunteers.

Demonstrations included woodworking, spinning and quilting. The Lost River Conservation Association, the Lawrence County Historical and Genealogical Society and the Stonebelt Stargazers set up display areas to answer questions and hand out information. Pioneer Village staff demonstrated fiddle making, wheat weaving and leatherwork.

In the afternoon, volunteers and interested visitors gathered in the program room for a special presentation by Carrie M. Miller, Volunteer Coordinator and David L. Williams, Historian. Carrie discussed volunteer applications, timecard usage, camping discounts and volunteer job opportunities. David discussed the interpretive time change to 1863 in the Pioneer Village that will allow for some new programs and costumes. Information packets about events occurring in Indiana in the year 1863 were made available to everyone.

Despite the rainy weather and the threat of snow, the Volunteer Resource Fair proved to be a successful, well-informed event. The 2003 volunteer program at Spring Mill State Park got off to a great start thanks to all of the current volunteers who helped make the event possible and to those interested individuals who plan to become volunteers this year.

## Mounds Recognizes Volunteers

The first volunteer recognition event was held on February 21, 2003 at Mounds State Park. Volunteers were encouraged to bring family and friends to enjoy the program and get a sneak peek at the new Visitor Center. Even in a snow storm, 25 people came to the program. Those receiving certificates for 50 hours of service were Jennifer Emery, Carol Arena, Jack and Vivian Stinson and Ron Wyatt. Charlie Boren and Phil Hallenbeck were recognized for over 100 hours of service.

## Mushrooms

by Debbie Threw

It was a magic day in early May,  
when Grandpa did arrive to say ,  
“It’s time to hunt for mushrooms.”  
With special sticks and sacks in hand  
we hunted, searched and scoured the land,  
all for the love of mushrooms.  
We felt the prick of many a rose  
as we traversed the path he chose,  
in the quest for the mightiest mushrooms.  
We learned of plants and birds and trees  
while we crawled around on hands and knees  
looking for the elusive mushrooms.  
Oh, Grandpa dear, you are the one  
who taught us how to have such fun  
while harvesting those mushrooms.  
So this year, remember, in early May,  
we will reserve a special day  
for us all to look and laugh and play...  
and maybe even find  
some mushrooms.

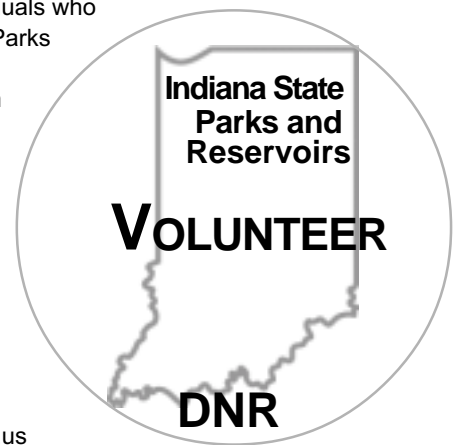


## Good Use for Old Paint

Gather up partial cans of paint for garden use. Use bright colors to paint the handles of garden tools.



The *Volunteer View* is issued 4 times a year for those individuals who regularly assist State Parks and Reservoirs as volunteers. A minimum of 50 hours of service annually is required to be placed on our mailing list. If you are interested in learning more about our volunteer opportunities, contact Ginger Murphy at 317-232-4143 or [gmurphy@dnr.state.in.us](mailto:gmurphy@dnr.state.in.us)



## Brown County Volunteer Recalls Classroom Teaching

by Jim Eagleman, Interpretive Naturalist,  
Brown County State Park

A talk on Indiana wildlife using representative skulls or a Native American artifact program might be a sizable undertaking for any staff interpreter or student intern, but for Bob Welsch, Columbus resident and retired middle school science teacher, it helps remind him of his 30+ years of teaching. "I find my volunteering here at Brown County is a natural way for me to return to my love of teaching." Bob has volunteered for 2 years and has recently accepted a 30 day employment at the Brown County State Park Interpretive Center. He enjoys presenting hikes and programs to park visitors and visiting school children. He has helped with some of the park's special events and enjoys meeting and dealing with the public. The Interpretive Center staff has remarked on several occasions how well Bob can relate to visitors of all ages. "I can honestly say I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know Bob and talking with him. He's a joy to be around and watch," says the park's full-time interpreter, Jim Eagleman. "Not only has he brought a refreshing enthusiasm to the program, but he has donated many of his science classroom props to the Interpretive Center." Bob joins staff interpreters Stacy Mathies,

Susan Douglas and Terri Warne and volunteers Pat EuDaly and "Bugman" Bill Floyd at several busy workdays throughout the summer

and fall. "Things get a bit hectic on certain days around here, and I sense the creativity each one of our volunteers and staff brings to the mix; it's exciting to be a part of this process," Jim agrees. "I know the visitors to our programs particularly appreciate our volunteers; we hear them say this and read the comments on our sign-in registration sheets. What a great resource for us."



"I find my volunteering here at Brown County is a natural way for me to return to my love of teaching," says Bob Welsch.

## Mounds Visitor Center Grand Opening

Mounds State Park held the grand opening of its new Visitor Center on March 21, 2003. Twenty volunteers helped 300 visitors on opening day and 500 visitors

during the weekend. All the volunteers have been with Mounds for a year or less and have graciously helped with the

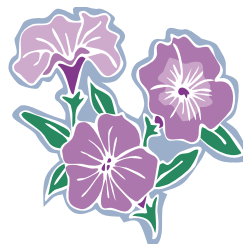


Volunteer Charlie Boren chats with children during the Mounds Visitor Center Grand Opening.

transition to the new building. Countless hours were spent sorting and boxing items from the old center and organizing and prepping the new center for opening day. During the opening, volunteers helped with the school groups, lead hikes, answered questions, ran AV equipment and much more. Several even stayed to help clean up afterwards. We had a very busy three weeks, but it was made easy thanks to the help of our dedicated volunteers.

## Clifty Falls Welcomes Shirley Craig

Becoming a grandmother for the first and second time in the past several years meant new priorities for Clifty Falls volunteer Shirley Craig. Granddaughter Kaylee Marie, daughter Mandy and newest granddaughter Hannah Mae are doing well, so Shirley is again finding time to volunteer. She is currently making great strides with the interpretive center inventory project.



*Do not go  
where the path may lead,  
go instead  
where there is no path  
and leave a trail.*

Ralph Waldo  
Emerson



## Volunteers in Action

•Ed Holzer volunteer at *Brown County State Park* picks up bird seed which was generously donated by Petsmart. The bird seed is used at gatehouses, park office and the interpretive center. Maintaining these feeders requires a large quantity of seed. The birds benefit as do the bird watchers.



Friends of Brown County State Park performing their "hit" drama about Abe Martin, the namesake of the property lodge. What a great way to raise funds.

•Betty Gregerson and Ann Olinger have volunteered to do office chores and be greeters at the Salamonie Visitor Center. Austin Couden, an Eagle Scout candidate, has

laid wood chips and stone, built two arbors and made a walking path for the property. Marty Gaskill is working on a web site for the Upper Wabash Interpretive Services. Check it out at <http://www.IN.gov/dnr/parklake/parks/uwis.html>.

•A.J. Chester, a 14 year old who loves nature and helping out, is a new volunteer at *Patoka Lake*. He has cleaned and refurbished the snake and turtle exhibits as well as the fish aquarium.

•Janis Hires and Zella Olson have been busy making vests for volunteers to wear while helping out.

## Indiana Dunes Annual Volunteer Appreciation Night

Indiana Dunes State Park held its annual Volunteer Appreciation Night on March 28, 2003. Twenty-three volunteers braved the cold, rainy evening to gather at the Interpretive Center. The night offered an opportunity for Ted Bohman, the new property manager, and Caroline Jones, the new interpretive naturalist, to introduce themselves to volunteers.

Recognition awards were given to Fran Drozynski for 292.5 hours of service, Gene Drozynski for 175.5 hours, Roy Olson for 37 hours and Jerry Wehner for 249 hours. In addition, Jerry Wehner was recognized as the Volunteer of the Year for 2002. He cares for the animals in the Interpretive Center, picks up trash around the park, trims trees and does any other work that needs to be done. His dedication and hard work are a valuable asset to Indiana Dunes State Park.

The night ended with the distribution of door prizes, which were generously donated by Diane's Gifts by the Basketful, Duneland Fundraising and the Friends of Indiana Dunes.



Volunteers wear vests made by volunteers Janis Hires from Mounds and Zella Olson from Indiana Dunes.



**DNR**

The mission of Indiana's State Parks and Reservoirs is to manage and interpret our properties' unique natural, wildlife and cultural resources using principles of multiple use and preservation, while sustaining the integrity of these resources for current and future generations.